UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Patricians, knights or nobles? Historiography and social status in late medieval Antwerp

Damen, M.

DOI

[10.1484/J.MLC.5.103717](https://doi.org/10.1484/J.MLC.5.103717)

Publication date

2014

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

The Medieval Low Countries. An Annual Review

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Damen, M. (2014). Patricians, knights or nobles? Historiography and social status in late medieval Antwerp. *The Medieval Low Countries. An Annual Review*, 1, 173-203.
<https://doi.org/10.1484/J.MLC.5.103717>

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (<https://dare.uva.nl>)

Patricians, Knights, or Nobles? Historiography and Social Status in Late Medieval Antwerp*

Mario DAMEN
University of Amsterdam

Abstract

This article explores the significance of writing history for a late medieval Antwerp patrician family: Van Halmale. In recent historiography, families like the Van Halmales have not received the attention they deserve, in part because their social status is difficult to pin down. Although the Van Halmales had knightly titles and performed deeds of arms on the battlefield and during tournaments, their noble status was not undisputed. Both a chronicle and a tournament diary written by different members of the Van Halmale family reflect the aspirations of a dominant social category in the late medieval towns of Brabant, Flanders, and Holland. Their writings reflect how the Van Halmales perceived themselves and how they wanted their contemporaries and peers to perceive them. In that sense the writing of history was indeed a means for nobles (and would-be-nobles) to justify (or to claim) their privileged position. Their works helped them to express their identity as powerful aldermen, firmly rooted in an urban environment but with open minds for the world of princes and (inter)national politics.

Anno 1413, Sigismundus, rex Bohemiae, imperator factus.

Eodem anno in den vasten was t'Antwerpen een steecspel op de merct, dux
Anthonis presentibus cum filliis Johanno et Philippo, heer Willem Noots

* All translations are the author's except where otherwise noted. A first draft of this paper was presented in Leiden at the conference 'Culture historique: la cour, les pays, les villes dans les anciens Pays-Bas (xiv^e-xvi^e siècles)' organized by the *Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes*. I want to thank Jan Burgers, Arjan van Dixhoorn, Robert Stein, Hilde Symoens, Arie van Steensel, and the anonymous reviewers who provided helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique in Brussels for their help and courtesy, especially to Ann Kelders.

was overste. Ende men schoot daer den papegaey daer hertoch Anthonis met schoot ende quam metten schutters eten op him samen (....).¹

[In 1413 Sigismund, king of Bohemia, was made emperor. During lent in the same year there was a joust on the market square in Antwerp in the presence of duke Anthony and his sons John and Philip, and sir Willem Noots was the convenor. One shot the popinjay there and duke Anthony participated as well and he joined the dinner party of the archers].

This entry from an Antwerp chronicle, the *Annales Antwerpienses*, written in both Latin and Dutch, contains a peculiar mix of political history and local events. It is exemplary for the entire chronicle, including the mistakes in the chronology.² The *Annales Antwerpienses* have only come down to us through a late sixteenth-century copy (or adaptation), written by Hendrik II van Halmale (1549-1614).³ As will be demonstrated in this article, several of Hendrik's ancestors have contributed to the chronicle in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The chronicle, or annals since it concerns a chronological list of events, was the work of many authors and grew over time. In that sense, it definitely lacks, as Graeme Dunphy signals in the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, a 'longer perspective' on historical events and a kind of 'author awareness'.⁴

Of course, the chronicle is incomparable with the work of the *grand maître* of Brabantine urban historiography where we do find these two characteristics: the Antwerp clerk Jan van Boendale. He started in 1316 with his *opus magnum* the *Brabantsche Yeesten* (the great deeds of Brabant). When he died in 1351 he left no less than 16,000 verses in Middle Dutch describing 750 years of the history of the duchy. Throughout the chronicle, the dynastic line of the successive dukes of Brabant is the 'backbone of history', as Frits van Oostrom puts it in his recent book on Low Country literature in the fourteenth century. The urban clerk Boendale considered

¹ Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (BRB), ms. 17234, f. 44r.

² Sigismund was elected king of the Romans twice, in 1410 and 1411, and crowned in Aachen in November 1414. Not until 1433 was he crowned emperor in Rome. It is interesting that the duke participated both in a joust and a competition of the shooting guilds. On the duke of Brabant's interest in these public festivities, see A. Chevalier-de Gottal, *Les fêtes et les arts à la cour de Brabant à l'aube du XV^e siècle* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), pp. 105-112.

³ H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Halmale, Hendrik van, jurist, stadsmagistraat', in: *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, 4 (Brussels, 1970), col. 391-393.

⁴ G. Dunphy, 'Chronicles (terminology)', in: *id.* (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (Leiden, 2010), p. 280.

the dukes as the keepers of the *gemeyn oerboer*, *le bien public*, the common good of the entire duchy.⁵

In contrast, in the *Annales Antwerpienses*, mainly written in Latin, the authors intertwined the history of the duchy with that of their hometown Antwerp and their own family. Floris Prims (1882-1954), an Antwerp archivist who published two series of books on Antwerp history, considered the chronicle as one of 'the most valuable chronicles for the history of Antwerp'.⁶ Still, this chronicle provides more than a chronological list of events of mere local importance. It sheds light on the meaning of the writing of history for a family that was for several successive generations active in the town administration, namely, the Van Halmale family. In that sense, the Van Halmale family enrich the diverse social profile of 'urban scribes' who produced historiographical works in the towns of the Low Countries and elsewhere in Europe.⁷

The *Annales Antwerpienses* is definitely not a unique historiographical work. The memorial books of Ghent, written between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the chronicle of Rotterdam written by Jan Allertsz, are examples of the same genre in other principalities.⁸ Still, most of these works were more focused on local political events than the *Annales*. Also, the entries in the Van Halmale chronicle are relatively

⁵ F. van Oostrom, *Wereld in Woorden. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur 1300-1400* (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 146-150; R. Stein, 'Jan van Boendales Brabantsche Yeesten: antithese of synthese?', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 106 (1991), 185-197, here 196-197.

⁶ F. Prims, 'De middeleeuwsche kronijken van Antwerpen', *Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde* (1936), 395-410 (p. 404); *id.*, 'De kronijk van de Halmale's', *Antwerpiensia*, 10 (1936), 322-330 (pp. 325-326); H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Halmale, Costen van, jurist, stadsmagistraat', in: *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, 4 (Brussels, 1970), col. 389-390.

⁷ R. Schmid, 'Town chronicles', in: G. Dunphy (ed.), *The encyclopedia of the medieval chronicle* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 1432-1438; R. Stein, 'Selbstverständnis oder Identität? Städtische Geschichtsschreibung als Quelle für die Identitätsforschung', in: H. Brand, P. Monnet and M. Staub (eds), *Memoria, communitas, civitas. Mémoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*, (Sigmaringen, 2003), pp. 182-183, 199.

⁸ A.-L. van Bruaene, *De Gentse memorieboeken als spiegel van stedelijk bewustzijn (14de tot 16de eeuw)* (Ghent, 1998); H. ten Boom and J. van Herwaarden, 'Rotterdamse kroniek. Aantekeningen van Rotterdamse stadssecretarissen, 1315-1499 (1570)', in: *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen*, II ('s-Gravenhage, 1980), pp. 7-92.

short and there are no lists of officeholders as was the case in the Ghent memorial books. Finally, the social profile of the Antwerp chroniclers does not correspond with that of the writers in Holland and Flanders who were clerks or secretaries, officers with subaltern jobs in the town administration. Their profile does show similarities with sixteenth-century chroniclers in Bruges and Ghent, for example, Nicolas Despars and Marcus van Vaernewijck. Although they were also heavily concerned with their own social status, contrary to the Van Halmales, they integrated their own political and religious points of view in the turbulent first decades of the Dutch Revolt.⁹

In this article, the significance of writing history for this Antwerp family will be explored. The Van Halmales will serve as a case study into an omnipresent social category in the towns of the Low Countries in the late Middle Ages. In recent historiography, families like the Van Halmales have not received the attention they deserve, in part because their social status is difficult to pin down. Historians normally refer to political officeholders like the Van Halmales as ‘patricians’: members of the economic elite of the town, which consisted of landowners, cloth entrepreneurs, and wholesalers who dominated the town administration. They formed a power elite within the town, bound together by marriage alliances and a common lifestyle, and derived prestige (and not seldom financial benefits) from the positions they held within the town administration. Frederick Buylaert noted already that it is very difficult to separate patricians from nobles in the towns of the county of Flanders, and the same goes for the duchy of Brabant.¹⁰ Use of the term ‘urban nobility’ to label these men should therefore be avoided since it stresses a non-existing contradiction

⁹ F. Buylaert, ‘Memory, Social Mobility and Historiography. Shaping Noble Identity in the Bruges Chronicle of Nicholas Despars (†1597)’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 88 (2010), pp. 377–409; K. Lamont, *Het wereldbeeld van een zestiende-eeuwse Gentenaar Marcus van Vaernewijck: een ideeën- en mentaliteitshistorische studie op basis van zijn kroniek, Van die beroerlijke tijden* (Verhandelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent, 30) (Ghent, 2005).

¹⁰ On the terms ‘urban nobility’ and ‘patriciate’, see F. Buylaert, *Eeuwen van ambitie. De adel in laatmiddeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 2010), pp. 259–266, and *id.*, ‘La “noblesse urbaine” à Bruges (1363–1563). Naissance d’un nouveau groupe social?’ in: Th. Dutour (ed.), *Les nobles et la ville dans l’espace francophone (XII^e–XVI^e siècles)* (Paris, 2010), pp. 247–275. See also A. van Steensel, *Edelen in Zeeland. Macht, rijkdom en status in een laatmiddeleeuwse samenleving* (Hilversum, 2010), pp. 312–318; A.F. Cowan, ‘Urban elites in early modern Europe: an endangered species?’, *Historical Research*, 64 (1991), 121–137.

between 'nobility' and 'town', whereas at the same time it falsely demarcates them as a well-defined category. In the Low Countries many nobles lived in towns or acquired citizenship because of fiscal and juridical advantages. Simultaneously, wealthy 'burghers' occupying urban offices aspired to become nobles through the acquisition of lordships and residences in the countryside. They could as well try to gain princely favor, receive the accolade, and perform a noble lifestyle at court.¹¹

It is not the purpose of this article to redefine these categories. However, when we maintain the label 'patricians' or even 'nobles', the question remains as to how these men behaved and perceived themselves and how their contemporaries and peers perceived them. A close inspection of their military and seigniorial titles, their (feudal) landed possessions, and their supposed noble behaviour (*vivre noblement*) therefore becomes imperative.¹² Many studies have already been dedicated to the noble lifestyle and the ways nobles tried to raise their status through the installation of heraldic devices on their houses, palaces, and funerary monuments.¹³ Still, we know much less about the written memorial culture of the elites of the Low Countries. Was the writing of history indeed a means for nobles (and would-be-nobles) to justify (or to claim) their privileged position?

That is why first the origins and social background of the Van Halmale family have to be traced. Then this article focuses on the writings of Costen I van Halmale, active in the Antwerp town administration in the 1420s and 1430s. He has left a 'tournament diary', a description of the tournaments in which he, his brother Jan II, and other fellow Antwerp

¹¹ J. Dumolyn, 'Dominante klassen en elites in verandering in het laatmiddeleeuwse Vlaanderen', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, 5 (2002), pp. 69–107, spec. 87–89, 94–95; P. Janssens, *De evolutie van de Belgische adel sinds de late Middeleeuwen*, (Brussels, 1998), pp. 480–481.

¹² B. Studt, 'Erinnerung und Identität. Die Repräsentation städtischer Eliten in spätmittelalterlichen Haus- und Familienbüchern', in: *ead.* (ed.), *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2007), pp. 1–31, here 5.

¹³ For a recent overview see A. van Steensel, 'Noble Identity and Culture. Recent Historiography on the Nobility in the Medieval Low Countries III', *History Compass*, 12 (2014), 287–299, pp. 290–291. Furthermore: F. Buylaert, W. De Clercq and J. Dumolyn, 'Sumptuary Legislation, Material Culture and the Semiotics of *Vivre Noblement* in the County of Flanders (14th–16th Centuries)', *Social history*, 36 (2011), 393–418; M. Vale, *War and Chivalry. Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981), pp. 63–99.

Fig. 1: Drawing of the epitaph of the Halmale family in the cathedral of Antwerp behind the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament. From: P. Génard, *Inscriptions funéraires et monumentales de la province d'Anvers. Arrondissement d'Anvers. Anvers, Église Cathédrale*, vol. I (Antwerp, 1856) 155.

Fig. 2: Genealogy of the Halmale family.

aldermen had participated. The participation in these tournaments can be an indication of the noble lifestyle aspired to by at least some members of the family. The descendants of Costen I and his brother Jan II have composed the *Annales* but it is not clear who exactly the authors (and copyists) were. We, therefore, have to establish the authorship of the chronicle by an analysis of its content. Then it is possible to discuss the role of the writings of the Van Halmales in relation to the social position of this family in Antwerp and the duchy of Brabant.

Origins

The origins of the Van Halmale family most probably lie in the village of Halmal, next to Sint-Truiden, which until 1366 formed part of the county of Loon, and afterwards the bishopric of Liege. The family had several possessions (lands and rents) in the surroundings of Sint-Truiden.¹⁴ Moreover, some family members were active in the administration of this town. Dirk van Halmale, for example, is mentioned as alderman of

¹⁴ It concerns only some small fiefs held by several Van Halmales, recorded between 1367 and 1374. None of the Van Halmales mentioned is indicated by any military or feudal title. C. Borman, *Le livre des fiefs du comté de Loos sous Jean d'Arkel* (Brussels, 1875), pp. 81, 88, 90, 131, 166, 200. I want to thank Sander Govaerts for this reference and others on the Van Halmale family in the fourteenth century.

Fig. 3: Detail of the occasional roll of the 1439 tournament in Brussels displaying the company of Costen I van Halmale (pennon): Peter Bode, Costen's brother Jan II and Willem Colibrant. Josse van Becherghhe, *Echevins de Bruxelles et tournoys*, 1582. Brussels, Archives de la ville, Archives historiques inv. nr. 3357, f. 56r.

Sint-Truiden in 1330.¹⁵ At a certain point, one of the Van Halmales must have moved to Antwerp. In 1358, the seal of Joris van Halmaal as 'poorter' (citizen) of Antwerp testifies to this move. Both his and Dirk's seal bear the coat of arms of the Van Langdries family (in heraldic terms 'de gules billey or, a lion or') with a bend, indicating a bastard branch.¹⁶ The Van Langdries were possessors of the castle of Ulbeek east of Sint-Truiden.¹⁷

Thus, the Van Halmales adopted the coat of arms of another family. According to the fourteenth-century genealogist Jacques de Hemricourt, the Van Langdries had themselves copied their coat of arms from the lord of Chateaufvillain in the county of Champagne, whom they had served

¹⁵ Brussels, *Archives générales du Royaume*, Collection de moulages de sceaux (CMC), inv. nr. 1157 (Empreinte de sceau de Thierry de Halmale, échevin de Saint-Trond, 30–3-1330).

¹⁶ CMC, inv. nr. 19361 (*Empreinte de sceau de Grégoire van Halmale, bourgeois d'Anvers, -1358*).

¹⁷ J.F.A.F. de Azevedo Coutinho y Benal, *Généalogie de la famille de Coloma* (Leuven, 1777), pp. 296.

in arms.¹⁸ Through their blazon the Van Halmales associated themselves with other noble families in the Low Countries and France. Still, none of the Van Halmales in the fourteenth century had a knightly or noble title. The Van Halmales were proud of their lineage, witnessed by a late sixteenth-century epitaph in the Antwerp church of Our Lady (Fig. 1). The first words of the epitaph beneath their coat of arms are both family names with their motto in between: 'Landris. Houdt mate. Halmale'. Furthermore, the epitaph states their ancestry: 'Familia De Landris prognati' (born from the family Langdries).¹⁹

It is difficult to track the exact genealogical lines of the Antwerp Van Halmale family in the fourteenth century and we know even less of their activities in the town.²⁰ According to De Azevedo, in his genealogy on the Coloma family from 1777 without any clear references, Joris had a son named Jan.²¹ Indeed, a Jan I van Halmale is mentioned as alderman of Antwerp in 1408 and 1409. In the two following years he is listed as a receiver of the town, and again in 1416, 1419, and 1420. In 1417 and 1418 he occupied other offices in the Antwerp town administration, as 'keurmeester' and 'gildedeken', respectively. These functions indicate that he had leading positions within one of the town's craft guilds.²² Jan I van Halmale was married to Elisabeth van Coelput, sister of alderman Costen van Coelput. From this marriage came two sons: Costen I and Jan II. These sons were united in wedlock to two daughters of the alderman and burgomaster, Gillis Bachelier (Fig. 2).

The coat of arms of Costen I van Halmale reveals an important aspect of his affinity (Fig. 3). After the Langdries family became extinct at the

¹⁸ Jacques de Hemricourt, *Miroir des nobles de Hasbaye*, ed. by Charles-François Jalheau (Liège, 1673), pp. 185–186.

¹⁹ P. Génard, *Inscriptions funéraires et monumentales de la province d'Anvers. Arrondissement d'Anvers. Anvers, Église Cathédrale*, I, (Antwerp, 1856), pp. 155–156. The motto means 'be moderate', or 'keep the moderation'.

²⁰ In 1394, a Peter van Halmale is inscribed as a citizen of Antwerp; eleven years later Andries van Halmale is also inscribed. Antwerp, Felix Archief, Ancien Régime archief van de stad Antwerpen (hereafter ARSA), inv. nr. V 1980, d.d. 16 January 1394 and 4 December 1405. Compare F. Alvin, 'Jetons Belges du xv^e siècle. Constantin van Halmale - Jean de Berghes - La Chambre des Comptes de Brabant', *Revue Belge de numismatique*, 54 (1898), 48–61, spec. pp. 50–51 who uses BRB, ms. Fonds Goethals (hereafter G.) nr. 1305 for a (dubious) link between Liège and Antwerp.

²¹ De Azevedo, *Généalogie*, p. 296.

²² F. Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen. Deel VI. Onder de Hertogen van Burgondië, Hertogen van Brabant (1406–1477)* (Brussels, 1934), pp. 174–179.

end of the fourteenth century, the Van Halmales adopted the complete coat of arms of Van Langdries without the bend. The inescutcheon or heart shield on Costen I's coat of arms represents the heraldic sign of the Van Berchem family, a paly of six, argent and gules. Probably one of the maternal ancestors was a member of this important noble family in the Antwerp district.²³ The integration of the Van Berchem coat of arms provided extra prestige to Costen I's own coat of arms. Note that the coat of arms of Costen I's brother Jan II does not bear this heart shield. Instead, it has a crescent symbolizing the fact that he was the second son (Fig. 3).²⁴

Costen I was probably named after his uncle (and maybe also after his grandfather), Costen van Coelput. Jan II also called one of his sons Costen and Costen I may have acted as godfather at the baptism. The name Costen (with variations as Costijn or Kosten) was an abbreviation of Constantine, the name of the first Christian emperor. Although the name may have had a certain prestige, it was not very common in late-medieval Brabant apart from (again) the Van Berchem family. For the Van Halmales, the name apparently was a *Leitname*, since it was given to many members of the family in the centuries to come.²⁵

Costen I mentions in his tournament diary that he first became alderman on the day of Saint Andrew, 1426, that is on 30 November. This shows his pride of this position and his eagerness to serve the town. Then he specifically refers to the marriage of his daughter Elisabeth in 1447-48 'by council of family and next-of-kin' with 'meester' Frans van der Dilt, the future lord of Borchvliet, an important lordship with high jurisdiction next to Bergen-op-Zoom.²⁶ Although Frans would inherit the lordship only nine years later, it was a new and important element in the family. The possession of such a lordship meant the exertion of public power and was an important marker of a noble status.²⁷ This is likely the reason why

²³ See their genealogy and coat of arms in Léon Jéquier and René van Berchem, *Sceaux et armoiries de la maison de Ranst et de Berchem du XIII^e au XVI^e siècle* (Neuchâtel, 1981), pp. 28-32.

²⁴ J.A. de Boo, *Familiewapens. Kentekens van verwantschap* (The Hague, 2008), p. 154.

²⁵ See De Azevedo Coutinho y Benal, *Généalogie*, pp. 296-300.

²⁶ Brussels, Archives de la ville, Archives historiques (BAV, AH) inv. nr. 3357 f^o 191r. Frans van der Dilt (d. before 24 November 1467) inherited the lordship of Borchvliet on 16 September 1458 after the death of his father Jan. P. de Win, *De adel in het hertogdom Brabant in de vijftiende eeuw (inzonderheid de periode 1430-1482)* II, (unpublished MA thesis Ghent University) (Ghent, 1979), p. 322.

²⁷ Buylaert, De Clercq and Dumolyn, 'Sumptuary legislation', pp. 396, 406-414.

Costen I mentions the marriage since no large properties are known to be possessed by the Van Halmale in the fifteenth century. This alliance and others (see Fig. 2) demonstrate that in the first half of the fifteenth century the Van Halmale family became very well integrated into the power elite of Antwerp and its surroundings. However, their social promotion stopped just outside the jurisdiction of the town; they did not conclude marriage alliances with members of the older Brabantine noble families.

Academic training

The Van Halmale were important urban political officeholders and they earned a great deal of their prestige serving the town as receiver, burgomaster, or alderman; in the first half of the sixteenth century they eventually were one of the four Antwerp families who accumulated 25 per cent of the offices in the magistrate.²⁸ Nevertheless, they were not important land owners; at least we do not encounter them in the registers of fiefs of the dukes of Brabant. Only Willem II van Halmale (d.1553) obtained the fief of Vriesele in Oelegem, a moated 'knightly mansion' surrounded by some lands southeast of Antwerp, through his marriage with Josine van Steenberghe.²⁹ Although this mansion certainly was an important distinctive marker for the Van Halmale, the fief did not include a lordship. Still, the acquisition of Vriesele, was definitely a turning point in the perception of the family.³⁰ The burial of one of the Van Halmale

²⁸ K. Wouters, 'De invloed van verwantschap op de machtsstrijd binnen de Antwerpse politieke elite (1520–1555)', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, 28 (2002), 29–56, spec. pp. 38–39.

²⁹ Vicomte de Ghellinck Vaernewyck, 'Un livre de raison anversois du xvi^e siècle. Les Van Halmale', *Annales de l'Académie Royale d'Archéologie de Belgique*, 56 (1904), 283–383, p. 362; Brussels (Anderlecht), Archives générales du Royaume, Archives de la Cour Féodale de Brabant (ACF), inv. nr. 30–2, f. 36v: *een ridderlicken hof met sijn hofgrachte (...) geheeten 't goet Vriesele*. See also A. Thys, 'Le château de Vriesele', *Recueil des bulletins de la propriété publiés par le journal l'Escaut d'Anvers pendant le cours de l'année 1878*, X (Antwerp, 1879), pp. 85–86.

³⁰ See also the declaration of the king of arms Toison d'or in 1712 in BRB, ms. G. 1305, f. 4r: 'Certifions et declarons d'avoir vu et examiné ce présent fragment généalogique de la très ancienne noble famille de Halmale, laquelle trouvons d'avoir jouij du titre de baron de Landris, consistant en six degres ou générations commençant de messire Guillaume de Halmale, chevalier etc., et dame Jozine van Steenberghe, dame heritière de Vriessel et finissant avec Alexandre Joseph de Halmale, seigneur de Vriesele, Vremdijcke, Willemskercke (...)'.

in the church of Sint-Lenaarts (see below), northeast of Antwerp, may indicate that the family had some allodial possessions in this area, but sources are lacking to prove this.

The question then is how did they earn their money? In 1432 and 1448 Costen I van Halmale was a member of the town administration acting as dean of one of the guilds. So it is possible that he was an entrepreneur or manufacturer. Several financial transactions indicate that the Van Halmale family had invested in seigniorial rights in the Scheldt estuary. In 1450, for example, 'meester' Jan II van Halmale together with three others sold the ferry rights ('den veere') in Antwerp to the town administration.³¹ Seven years later in 1457, Costen I van Halmale and three other Antwerp patricians sold the fishing rights in the Scheldt estuary between Antwerp and Oosterweel, again to town administration.³² These were considerable transactions for which the town had to ask permission from duke Philip the Good (r. 1419-1467). The possession of these rights did not mean that the Van Halmale family themselves were personally involved in fishing or ferrying. These were simply investments of wealthy citizens in profitable rights, in which apparently the town of Antwerp was interested as well.

The *Annales Antwerpienses* reveal more about the interest of the Van Halmale family in the commercial and seafaring activities of Antwerp and its neighbouring ports. The largest entry of the entire chronicle, containing 39 lines and covering almost two entire pages, concerns a description of a Venetian carrack ('caraca' in Italian):

In the same year [1463] a big carrack from Venice was moored in Arnemuiden at Rammekensveer, and it was measured by my father Costen [II] van Halmale as will now follow. And it had a length of 40 fathoms and the mast was 33 fathoms high and 4 fathoms wide. (...)

When the carrack put out to the sea it was worth 49,000 ducats, without the cargo. And this carrack was shipwrecked when it returned to Venice, somewhere between Zeeland and England.³³

³¹ ARSA, inv. nr. CH # 312 (d.d. 13 November 1450).

³² ARSA, inv. nr. CH # 323 (d.d. 1 February 1457, n.s.). They used to lease out these rights for 5 lb. 10 s. gr. Brabantine pounds per year. The other sellers were Jacob Willemaer, Thomas and Klaas van der Elst.

³³ 'Eodem anno in Arnemuyden in Zeelant tot Rammekensveer was die groote crake van Venegien ende is gemeten, alsoo hiernaer volcht, bij mijnen vader Costen van Halmale. Ende was lanck 40 vademen ende den mast 33 vademen lanc ende was dic 4 vademen. (...) Dese crake was weert doen sij uuyten lande voeren, sonder 't goet datter in was, 49.000 ducaten. Ende dese crake bedarff

This excerpt gives an indication of the extraordinary measures of the carrack, a huge Mediterranean cargo ship with castles at bow and stern integrated into the hull.³⁴ Antwerp's harbor was partially dependent on the ports of Arnemuiden and Middelburg on the isle of Walcheren in the Scheldt estuary. The news of the arrival of such a big boat in Arnemuiden must have made an impression on contemporaries.³⁵ Still, Venetian galleys were not unknown in the harbor of Antwerp where their presence is noted already from 1317 onwards, but carracks were scarcer.³⁶ The fascination for Italian ships is confirmed by entries in the chronicle for 1437, 1438, 1447, 1459, and 1460 describing the arrival of Venetian galleys in Antwerp.³⁷ Moreover, the completion of four galleys, constructed between 1446 and 1449 in Antwerp for a military expedition into the Mediterranean, is mentioned in the chronicle.³⁸ This shows that the interest of the Van Halmales was more than simply amazement and that they were aware of what was going on in the Antwerp harbor.

Most probably, the Burgundian duke Philip the Good wanted to buy the Venetian carrack in his last attempt to fit out for a crusade, during the last months of 1463 and the first months of 1464.³⁹ He had tried the same

int wederkeren naer Venegien ter plaetsen tusschen Zeelant ende Engelant'. BRB, ms. 17234, f. 60r-61r.

³⁴ L.R. Martin, *The Art and Archaeology of Venetian Ships and Boats* (Rochester, 2001), pp. 88–89, 138–139, 178. A fathom was approximately six feet, which was in Antwerp contemporary measures 1.72 meters. This means that the carrack had a length of almost 69 meters, whereas the mast measured about 57 meters. The width of the ship was more than 24 meters.

³⁵ However, the ship is not mentioned by the chronicler Jan Reygersbergh, *Dye chronijcke van Zeelandt* (Antwerp, 1551) s.f. in his entries for the years 1463 and 1464, although he does mention Philip the Good's crusade plans. I thank Arie van Steensel for this reference.

³⁶ G. Asaert, *De Antwerpse scheepvaart in de XV^e eeuw (1394–1480). Bijdrage tot de economische geschiedenis van de stad Antwerpen* (Brussels, 1973), pp. 55–56.

³⁷ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 48v–49r, 52v, 57v–58r. For 1459, the exact day and time of arrival are given, whereas for 1460 the names of the captains are inserted. See also Asaert, *Antwerpse scheepvaart*, 55 who testifies to the arrival of the Venetians ships in 1437, 1438, and 1448 from other sources.

³⁸ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 52v: *Eodem anno [1447] gallera Philippi ducis fuerunt complete prope Calchoven extra muros*. See on the four galleys J. Paviot, *La politique navale des ducs de Bourgogne, 1384–1482* (Lille, 1995), pp. 123–124, 294

³⁹ Paviot, *La politique*, pp. 128–129; R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy* (London, 1970), pp. 369–372.

– in vain – seven years before. Maybe Costen II van Halmale, a trained lawyer from the university of Orléans, was charged by a ducal officer to measure the boat (for an estimation of the number of men and supplies that could be transported) and calculate approximately the value of the boat without the cargo (to know the eventual cost for the ducal treasury).⁴⁰ It is possible that Costen II acted as a professional lawyer, a notary, or an advocate, who could easily make a living in a busy port like Antwerp.

In fact, the most striking feature of the Van Halmale family is their academic training. Eight of the eleven members of the Van Halmale family who were aldermen in the Antwerp town administration between 1430 and 1580 studied at one or two European universities, most of them in nearby Leuven but also farther away. The series starts with Jan II van Halmale who studied law in Bologna in 1421 and was then qualified as ‘clericus’.⁴¹ So it is with reason that Jan II – who apparently left the clerical estate – bears the title of ‘meester’, which is a reference to his academic background.⁴² Moreover, Jan II sent his son Costen II to the University of Orléans to study law in the 1450s. But there are more descendants of the Van Halmale family who can be tracked down in the matriculation lists of Leuven, Orléans, and other European universities.⁴³

⁴⁰ That is at least what happened in 1456 when a ‘grand karake’ from Venice was also moored in Arnemuiden. Philip the Good wanted to buy the ship for his planned crusade. Paviot has edited a document which contains detailed description of the equipment of the boat (‘Habillemens servans à la nave’). This list shows striking similarities with Van Halmale’s description. However, the estimated value of this carrack (32,000–33,000 ducates), the number of anchors, and the available artillery indicate, in fact, a different ship. J. Paviot, ‘Les navires du duc de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon (vers 1440–1465)’, in *Atti del V. convegno internazionale di studi Colombiani. Navi e navigazione nei secoli XV e XVI* (Genua, 1990), pp. 169–195 (spec. 182–184). See also Paviot, *La politique*, p. 288.

⁴¹ H. de Ridder-Symoens, ‘De universitaire vorming van de Brabantse stadsmagistraat en stadsfunktionarissen - Leuven en Antwerpen, 1430–1580’, *Studia Historica Gandensis* (1977), 21–124, pp. 70, 111.

⁴² See, for example, ARSA, inv. nr. CH # 312.

⁴³ See the biographies of De Ridder-Symoens, ‘Halmale, Costen van’ and ‘Halmale, Gaspar van, jurist, stadsmagistraat’, in *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, 4 (Brussels, 1970), col. 390–391. Those who studied in Orléans: H. de Ridder-Symoens, D. Illmer, and C.M. Ridderikhoff, *Les livres des procureurs de la nation germanique de l’ancienne Université d’Orléans 1444–1602. Tome I, 2, Premier livre des procureurs, de la nation germanique de l’ancienne université d’Orléans, 1444–1546* (Leiden, 1978), nrs. 87 (Costen II van Halmale, 1457),

The presence of the Van Halmales in *academia* is an indication of their considerable wealth; in fact, they are generally listed as 'divites' (rich) and only sporadically as 'nobilis' in the matriculation lists.⁴⁴ The family evidently considered an academic education as the means to obtain and maintain an influential position within the town and the town administration. Studying law could be a means to obtaining a job in the central government institutions where lawyers were in high demand. Although they acquired a firm position within the town administration, the Van Halmales did not, however, gain promotion into the princely administration. Maybe they simply lacked the prestige or the right networks to enter into the princely institutions in Brussels or beyond. Their academic training and subsequent skills in Latin could explain the main language of the chronicle, which is exceptional for this type of urban chronicle in the later Middle Ages.⁴⁵

Knightly titles and tournaments

Their academic training did not lead the Van Halmales to Brussels. What is more, in the fifteenth century, the Van Halmales were not even summoned in the second estate of the Estates of Brabant.⁴⁶ This means that contemporaries did not consider them as members of the knighthood or the nobility of Brabant. Nevertheless, some genealogical works refer to the Van Halmales

96 (Pieter van Halmale, 1459–1462), 357 (Jasper van Halmale, 1501) and 834 (Willem van Halmale, 1530, probably the son of Jasper).

⁴⁴ See on these terms E. De Maesschalck, 'De criteria van de armoede aan de middeleeuwse universiteit te Leuven', *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 58 (1980), 337–354, pp. 337–339 and H. De Ridder-Symoens, 'Rich Men, Poor Men: Social Stratification and Social Representation at the University (13th–16th Centuries)', in: W. Blockmans and A. Janse (eds), *Showing Status. Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 2* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 159–176. I thank Hilde Symoens for an extensive list of all members of the Van Halmale family who studied at European universities between 1400 and 1700.

⁴⁵ Compare, for example, the *Chronijcke van Nederlant*, the *Brabandsche Kronijk* and the *Chronycke van Nederlant, besonderlyck der stadt Antwerpen*, which all treat the medieval period and are written in Dutch in the form of annals: C. Piot (ed.), *Chroniques de Brabant et de Flandre* (Brussels, 1879).

⁴⁶ At least they are not mentioned in the summons lists for the Estates in the years 1406, 1463, and 1489. M. Damen, 'Prelaten, edelen en steden. De samenstelling van de Staten van Brabant in de vijftiende eeuw', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke commissie voor geschiedenis*, forthcoming.

as knights and nobles.⁴⁷ The funerary monument that was erected at the end of the sixteenth century in the church of Our Lady in Antwerp seems to confirm this. On the epitaph, Jan I van Halmale, son of Joris, is qualified both as 'eques auratus' and 'eques ordinarius apud Eburones'. His grandsons Jan III and Costen II are qualified as 'golden knight' as well, although their father Jan II van Halmale is only titled as 'armiger' or squire (Fig. 1).⁴⁸

What can be said about this claim to knightly titles? We do not know much about the category of 'golden knights'. Only the Holy Roman Emperor could confer this title as a reward for special services performed. Charles V especially made use of this privilege; for example, he granted Titian the title after the painter had finished his famous equestrian portrait. The title was meant for men who did not spring from a noble or knightly family.⁴⁹ Brabant is not the only principality of the Low Countries where golden knights can be found. In a list of nobles from Bruges of 1563, several 'equites aurati' are mentioned; an equivalent in Dutch, however, is not used in the archival and monumental sources.⁵⁰ As a symbol of their knighthood these knights were allowed to wear golden spurs, partly gilded armour and a golden necklace. It was probably this symbol that was carved into the funerary monument in Antwerp next to their coat of arms (Fig. 1). It is clear that the 'equites' differed from 'milites', which is how most knights were normally titled on monuments and in written sources. Still, the Van Halmale were proud of their title since they mention it four times on their epitaph.⁵¹

But is this knighthood based on any historical evidence? In his tournament diary, Costen I calls his father Jan I a knight but of course this is a biased source.⁵² Still, Costen I and Jan II are never indicated as 'heer' (Sir) in the

⁴⁷ De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', pp. 321–332. De Azevedo Coutinho y Benal, *Généalogie*, p. 296 states as well that Jan I van Halmale was a knight.

⁴⁸ Génard, *Inscriptions*, I, p. 155.

⁴⁹ E. Schmitt, 'Behaust im Heiligen Römischen Reich? Das europäische Beziehungsnetz der *equites aurati* im Zeitalter Kaiser Karls V'. (<http://archive.is/4DnV>, consulted on 12 November 2013); C. Hope, 'Titian as a Court Painter', *Oxford Art Journal*, 2 (1979), 7–10, p. 9. In 1998, Schmitt had a research project at the University of Bamberg into the 'equites aurati'. Some results are published in the article, 'Die "Ritter vom Guldernen Sporn": eine Leistungselite der Zeit Kaiser Karls V', in: S. Diller (ed.), *Karl V. und seine Zeit* (Schweinfurt, 2000), pp. 136–150.

⁵⁰ F. Buylaert, *Repertorium van de Vlaamse adel (c. 1350- c. 1500)* (Ghent, 2011), pp. 40, 52, 90, 148, 166, 282, 530.

⁵¹ Génard, *Inscriptions*, I, p. 155.

⁵² BRB ms. II 6446, f. 147v.

administrative sources, which in Brabant was normally an indication of a knightly status.⁵³ Jan III was dubbed a knight since he is entitled as 'heer' (Sir) both in the lists of aldermen and in a sixteenth-century chronicle. The *Annales Antwerpienses* qualify him explicitly as 'miles' and not as 'eques auratus', an indication that contemporaries were aware of the difference between the two terms.⁵⁴ For the sixteenth century there is more evidence on the supposed knightly titles of the Van Halmale. The *Annales Antwerpienses* mention that Charles V, during a mass in the cathedral on the occasion of his joyous entry into Antwerp in 1515, 'created' four golden knights among the Antwerp urban elite.⁵⁵ Although none of them belonged to the Van Halmale family, it seems this was definitely an imperial policy, which, however, cannot be traced in the fifteenth century. In another chronicle it is stated that Charles V in 1545 personally conferred knighthood ('ende sloeghe voor ridders') to Willem II van Halmale (d.1553), son of Costen II, together with two other Antwerp patricians.⁵⁶ Willem II and his son, Costen III, are also qualified as 'equites aurati' on the epitaph in the Antwerp cathedral. Costen III took part in the military expedition against Tunis in 1535.⁵⁷ According to the epitaph, Charles V granted him knighthood exactly because of his military efforts ('militarem operam', see Fig. 1). His title is confirmed by an inscription on the first stone he laid for the Huidevetterstoren bastion in Antwerp in 1551.⁵⁸

⁵³ Of course *heer* can also indicate that a man is a priest, but this is normally evident from the context: M. Damen and A. Janse, 'Adel in meervoud. Methodologische beschouwingen over comparatief adelsonderzoek in de Bourgondische Nederlanden', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 123 (2008), 517–540, pp. 534–536; A. Janse, *Ridderschap in Holland. Portret van een adellijke elite in de late middeleeuwen* (Hilversum, 2001), p. 83.

⁵⁴ Prims, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 203–206. In 1477, 'heer Jan van Halmale' was the leader of the delegation of forty 'notabele mannen' from Antwerp who went in 1477 to Cologne to welcome Maximilian, the new husband of Mary of Burgundy. Piot, *Chroniques*, p. 81. This event is also mentioned in *Annales Antwerpienses*: BRB, ms. 17234, f. 75v where Jan explicitly is called 'miles'.

⁵⁵ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 132v: 'Eodem anno [1515] 13 februarii, venit Carolus dux ad missam in templo D. Mariae et ibidem creavit in templo quattuor equites auratos, D. Gerardum van de Werve, D. Petrum van der Moelen, D. Henricum de Berchum, D. Nicolam de Liere'.

⁵⁶ The other patricians were Hendrik van Berchem and Aert van Lierre, see Piot, *Chroniques*, pp. 120–121.

⁵⁷ De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', p. 367.

⁵⁸ 'Constant Hamalus, eques auratus, huic moli primum jecit lapidem die 17 julii Anno 1551'. Piot, *Chroniques*, p. 129.

If Jan I really was a (golden) knight, it becomes understandable that his sons Costen I and Jan II exhibited chivalric behaviour. Costen I boasts in his tournament diary that he, sometimes together with his brother, participated in numerous tournaments. The original diary was lost but it was copied into two sixteenth-century manuscripts and a seventeenth-century one. In the first manuscript, the author maintains that it was a copy from 'a certain memorandum held by sir Costen [I] van Halmale and written with his own hand'.⁵⁹ In the second manuscript it is stated that it was copied from 'an old paper register that in 1584 belonged to the former alderman 'joncker' Henric van Halmale', that is, Hendrik II, the copyist of the *Annales Antwerpienses*.⁶⁰ From the third manuscript it becomes clear that there was another copy kept by 'Willem lord of Halmale', 'amman (a senior judicial officer) of Antwerp'.⁶¹ So several members of the Van Halmale family kept a copy and were interested in and proud of the deeds of arms of their forefathers. The tradition of writing and keeping records in the Van Halmale family was clearly established by Costen I and kept alive by his (brother's) descendants. In the first manuscript, the composition of the Antwerp companies at the 1439 tournament in Brussels has been added through the representation of their coats of arms.⁶² It is not clear whether these coats of arms were present in the original diary.

The tournament diary is interesting because it highlights the active participation of a patrician in tournaments in the Low Countries. In addition, it provides detailed information on Burgundian tournament culture. A quote from the diary on the 1441 tournament in Utrecht can illustrate this:

⁵⁹ BRB ms. II 6446, f. 147r.

⁶⁰ BAV, AH inv. nr. 3357, f. 190v: 'Diet is gecopiert uuyt een oudt register van pampier anno 1584 toebehorende joncker Henric van Halmale oudt scepen der stadt van Handtwerpen'.

⁶¹ I was not able to consult this third copy which appears in a manuscript kept in the university library of Liège entitled, *Copie des armes et blasons des évêques de Tongres et de Liège*, written by the canon H. Van den Bergh in the seventeenth century. On f. 785–785 there are some 'fragments généalogiques et héraldiques relatifs à plusieurs tournois qui ont été célébrés à Louvain, à Bruges, à Anvers, à Bruxelles, à Malines et à Utrecht. (Gehouden by Willem heer Van Halmale, amman der stadt van Antwerpen)'. See *Bibliothèque de l'Université de Liège. Catalogue des manuscrits* (Liège, 1875), p. 462. I thank Hilde Symoens for this reference.

⁶² BRB ms. II 6446, f. 148r–150r

Item in the year [14]41 there was a tournament in Utrecht where the squire Aert, son of Zevenbergen, and Daniel van Bouchout acted as bannerets.⁶³ From here those who participated were Sir Jan van der Bruggen as margrave, Jan [II] van Halmale, Peter Bode and Jan van der Meeren. And it was Sir Jan van der Bruggen who received the prize and sword and the bastard son of the lord of Gaasbeek received the helmet. The next day there was a joust with lances and shields [...] and the third day there was another joust where Wein de Mol, bailiff of 's-Hertogenbosch and I, Costen [I], won the prizes. [...] And it was unfair that Jan van der Meeren did not receive the prize on the first day.⁶⁴

Costen I supplies fascinating details on tournament forms, participants, prizes and prize-winners. He combines a relatively concise account with a personal touch (note his indignation in the last sentence). But above all, the fact that Costen I van Halmale wrote this is significant in itself. Apparently, it was important to this alderman to testify to his (and his brother's) chivalric way of life and eternalize it on paper for his descendants. It is the expression of the self-consciousness of a patrician aspiring to a noble lifestyle and for recognition of this by his contemporaries.

Having said that, it is not clear how this text has functioned in Antwerp society. Was it solely written for his descendants or did it function in a wider social context? The names of the participants mentioned by Costen I demonstrate that he was not unique. There were other aldermen and urban officeholders from Antwerp and from Brussels, Leuven and 's-Hertogenbosch as well, who participated and competed for prizes in these tournaments.⁶⁵ What is more, this chivalric attitude was not limited to the duchy of Brabant. In the Flemish towns of Bruges and Lille jousts

⁶³ Leaders of the two opposing teams.

⁶⁴ 'Item in't jair van 41 soe was tot Utrech eenen tornoiij daer baenrots was joncker Aerts, zone van Sevenberghe, ende Daniel van Boechout, ende van hier waren heer Jan van der Bruggen als mercgreve, Jan van Halmale, Pieter Bode ende Jan van der Meeren, daeraf den danck ende sweert hadde heer Jan van der Bruggen ende den helm hadde hadde [sic] mijns joncker zone van Gaesbeke, bastaert. Des anders daeghs staec men met speren en met scilden daer den danck hadde mijn joncker van Bergen ende joncker Aerts zone van Sevenberghen. Ende des derden daeghs staect men noch, daeraf den danck hadde Wein de Mol scoutet ten Bossche ende ic Costen. (...) Ende men dede Jan van der Meeren onghelic dat hij des ierst dachs den danc niet en hadde'. BAV, AH inv. nr. 3357, f. 190v.

⁶⁵ M. Damen, 'The Town, the Duke, his Courtiers and their Tournament. A Spectacle in Brussels, 4–7 May 1439', in: W. Blockmans, A. van Oosterwijk *et al.* (eds), *Staging the Court of Burgundy* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 85–95.

were organized annually by jousting societies, entirely financed by the civic authorities. During these spectacles (called the White Bear and the Épinette, respectively), well-off patricians and merchants from the city would joust with their counterparts from other Flemish cities, with nobles, courtiers, and sometimes even with the duke himself or members of his household.⁶⁶

Still, the detailed information Costen I van Halmale gives in his diary is unparalleled. He describes his participation in nine tournaments which took place in Antwerp (twice), Leuven (twice), Brussels (twice), Malines, Bruges, and Utrecht. So seven events he attended took place in the duchy of Brabant (if we include the town of Malines), one in the county of Flanders, and one in the prince bishopric of Utrecht. This shows that Costen participated in tournaments relatively close to his hometown. Then again, this fits into a broader pattern of tournament culture in the fifteenth century in which local events dominated, next to more international orientated *pas d'armes*, which were more courtly festivals in an urban setting.⁶⁷

Evidence from two occasional rolls of arms confirms Costen I's participation in the tournaments. The first roll gives the names and coats of arms of the 235 participants in the tournament of 1439 in Brussels.⁶⁸ In his diary, Costen I describes the exact composition of the four Antwerp companies that participated in this huge *mêlée*-style tournament at the Grote Markt in Brussels. The seventeen tourneyers listed in the diary match the coats of arms that are depicted in the occasional roll.⁶⁹ In 1439, Costen I was the leader of one of the smallest companies at the tournament consisting of only three helms. It is an indication of his relatively modest status. His coat of arms is represented on a pennon symbolizing his leadership (Fig. 3). His company consisted of Peter Bode and Willem Colibrant, both from Antwerp patrician families, and Costen I's brother

⁶⁶ A. Van den Abeele, *Het ridderlijk gezelschap van de Witte Beer. Steekspelen in Brugge tijdens de late Middeleeuwen* (Bruges, 2000); A. Brown, 'Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages: The White Bear of Bruges', *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 78 (2000), 315–330; E. Van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes, pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du Moyen Âge (1300–1486)* (Paris, 1996) is primarily focused on the tournaments in Lille.

⁶⁷ M. Damen, 'Tournament Culture in the Low Countries and England', in: H. Skoda, P. Lantschner and R.L.J. Shaw (eds), *Contact and Exchange in Later Medieval Europe. Essays in Honour of Malcolm Vale* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 247–266.

⁶⁸ See on this tournament Damen, 'The Town', pp. 85–95.

⁶⁹ J.-M. van den Eeckhout, *Le tournoi de Bruxelles du lundi 4 mai 1439* (Sint-Niklaas, 2012), pp. 124–127.

Fig. 4. Detail of the occasional roll of the 1441 tournament in Utrecht displaying the company of Hendrik van der Bruggen (pennon) : Jan II van Halmale, Peter Bode and Jan van der Meeren. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique ms. II 6567, f. 340r.

Jan II van Halmale. Although his company was small, the alderman must have spent a fortune to stay for a week in Brussels, paying for his own as well as his company members' travel costs and lodgings and buying or hiring horses, harnesses, and arms.

The same goes for the Utrecht tournament in 1441. Fig. 4 shows a part of the Antwerp team in the roll of arms of this chivalric event, which was organized by the powerful banneret 'jonker' Jacob van Abcoude, lord of Gaasbeek.⁷⁰ The coats of arms and the names of the men mentioned in the citation above are represented: Jan van der Bruggen, with a pennon indicating his leadership of the team, Jan II van Halmale, Peter Bode, and Jan van der Meeren.⁷¹ Costen I himself only jousted at this tournament and did not participate in the *mêlée*; that is the reason why his coat of arms is not integrated into the armorial.

⁷⁰ Jacob did not only own Gaasbeek, an important lordship southwest of Brussels, but also other lordships in the neighboring principalities of Guelders, Holland, and the prince-bishopric of Utrecht. A.C. de Groot, 'Zweder en Jacob van Gaasbeek in Zuid-Holland', in *Zuid-Hollandse Studien*, 9 (1959), 39–99, pp. 64–65; A. Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement du duché de Brabant au Bas Moyen Âge (1355–1430)* (Brussels, 1975), pp. 653–654.

⁷¹ BRB, ms. II 6567, f. 340r.

All this implies that he was not only proud to show a chivalric attitude – in his diary Costen I boasts about the prizes he has won – but also to represent his town together with his fellow patricians, whom he always mentions by name. The prestige and renown of both the individual patricians and the town was enhanced when they won prizes – as they did constantly according to Costen I. In this sense, chivalric and civic pride went hand in hand. At the same time, the tournament served as a means of distinction in relationship to members of other leading families in Antwerp who did or could not participate. The evidence of the tournament diary was used up until the seventeenth century to prove the noble qualities of the Van Halmale family.⁷² In that sense, the diary of Costen enhanced the social status of the family, at least in later centuries.

The inclusion of the coats of arms of the Costen I and Jan II van Halmale in the prestigious Gelre armorial is possibly connected to their martial activities. The inscription of their battle cry – ‘Landries’ – just above their coats of arms indicates the link with their participation in the tournaments in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The dating of the original armorial – between 1370 and 1402/05 – means that their blazons must have been inserted into the armorial after the death of its main author, the herald Claes Heynenz, around 1414. There is more evidence that points to a later insertion into the armorial. The page with their coats of arms comes after the section dedicated to the nobility of Brabant and Limburg.⁷³ Again, it comes to the fore that the family was desperate to show the acceptance of its noble status by the rest of the

⁷² See BRB ms. G. 1305, f. 17 (letter of 1678): ‘Gelijck wij oock bevinden verscheijden tornoijen van hertoghen van Brabant in de welcke van de familie en de naem van Halmale als ridderlijcken aedel hebben geïntervenieert’.

⁷³ C. Van Den Bergen-Pantens (ed.), *Gelre B.R. Ms. 15652–56* (Leuven, 1992), pp. 287, 181, 333; M. Pastoureau and M. Popoff (eds), *Armorial de Gelre. Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Ms 15652–15656* (Paris, 2012), pp. 323–324. The five coats of arms on f. 76v (apart from Jan and Costen van Halmale, Jan van Cortenbach, Jan van Mechelen and Wouter Berthout are listed) have a somewhat different form than the blazons of the preceding Brabantine march. Moreover, these five coats of arms seem to be the only ones in the armorial with a battle cry written above. On the problem of the dating of the manuscript, compare H.T. Colenbrander, *Op zoek naar de gebroeders Limburg: de Très Riches Heures in het Musée Condé in Chantilly, Het Wapenboek Gelre in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I in Brussel en Jan Maelwael en zijn neefjes Polequin, Jehannequin en Herman van Limburg* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis Amsterdam, 2006), pp. 306–308.

Brabantine nobility. This conscious intent can be demonstrated as well in the other writings of the Van Halmales.

The Van Halmales and their chronicle

With his tournament diary, Costen I initiated a family tradition in recording events for posterity. It was probably his nephew and namesake Costen II, son of his brother Jan II, who started taking notes for what is now known as the *Annales Antwerpienses*.⁷⁴ The chronicle, which is only transmitted through a copy from the late sixteenth century, is written mainly in Latin but there are passages in Dutch as well. From several personal entries it can be established that different members of the Van Halmale family have contributed to the chronicle.

Table 1 shows an overview of the contents of the chronicle. Remarkably, the manuscript begins with the circumference of the towns of Leuven, Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Cologne, and Antwerp.⁷⁵ It is probably the case that the notebook first had another purpose. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the Van Halmales derived their information from other chronicles and written sources. For example, the institutional overview of Brabant is almost completely copied from *Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant*, the first printed chronicle (in Antwerp!) on the history of the duchy from 1497: an enumeration of the towns in the duchy, a list of the abbeys, and a list of the lordships held by bannerets.⁷⁶ The *terminus post quem* of the writing of this part of the chronicle must therefore be 1497. Apparently, the *Cronyke* was a source of inspiration for the Van Halmales. It shows their vivid interest

⁷⁴ BRB, ms. 17234.

⁷⁵ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 2r.

⁷⁶ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 4r-9v. For example, the text of the illustrated 'tree of banners' from the *Cronyke* is exactly copied on f. 9r-v. See J. Tigelaar, *Brabants historie ontvouwd. Die alder excellenste cronyke van Brabant en het Brabantse geschiedbeeld anno 1500* (Hilversum, 2006), p. 43. After this list, on f. 10r, the author mentions the nine words of which the first letters form the word 'Brabancia' where he specifically refers to the *Cronicke van Brabant*. In the *Cronyke*, this etymological explanation of the word Brabant – which itself has an older tradition – follows directly after the tree of banners, just like in the *Annales*. See Tigelaar, *Brabants historie*, pp. 65–66, 73–74 and W. van Anrooij, 'Hennen van Merchtenen en de lof op Brabancia', *Spiegel der letteren. Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse literatuurgeschiedenis en voor literatuurwetenschap*, 35 (1993), 153–157.

Table 1: Contents of the *Annales Antwerpienses*

Folio nrs	Subject / Years
2r	Circumference of Brabantine towns
2v	Creation of the world
2v-3v	Nine worthies, seven prince-electors, twelve peers of France, thirty saints
4r-9v	Institutional overview of Brabant
10r	Etymology <i>Brabancia</i>
11r-12v	Foundation of Antwerp (Antigoon and Brabo)
13r-14r	
14v-17r	Years 147-1007
17v-19r	1027-1303
19v-39r	1304-1350
39v-59r	1350-1401
59v-79r	1402-1477
79v-99r	1478-1489
99v-119r	1490-1510
119v-139r	1510-1516
139v-159r	1516-1524
159v-177v	1524-1533

for Brabantine history and their eagerness to interweave their historical knowledge with their own story.

The annals properly start in the year 147, the birth of Galenus and the death of Joan of Sint-Pol.⁷⁷ This is a curious mistake because Joan, the wife of Anthony of Burgundy, duke of Brabant from 1406 to 1415, did not die in 147 but in 1407. The chronicler then takes giant steps through the early history of the duchy, highlighting the death of Carloman, ‘primus princeps Brabantinorum’, the said father of Pepin of Landen, in 617.⁷⁸ The inclusion of Carloman is completely in line with an old Brabantine historiographical tradition that considered the Karolingians as the first

⁷⁷ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 14v: ‘Anno 147, Galenus medicus natus. Eodem anno, obiit Joanna van Simpoel, ducissa Brabantiae et sepulta Ter Vueren’.

⁷⁸ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 15r.

dukes of Brabant.⁷⁹ In 837, the first entry in Dutch is registered: the burning of Antwerp by the 'Deenen ende Noormannen'.⁸⁰

The author intermingles official events on a national or international level (the death or inauguration of the German emperor, the French king, and of course the duke of Brabant) with local events in which competitions between archers, tourneyers, and rhetoricians regularly come to the fore.⁸¹ Strangely enough, the Brussels tournament of 1439 is only mentioned briefly. What is more, it is dated in 1440 and no reference is made to the participation of the Van Halmale brothers. Apparently, the author of this entry did not realize that two Van Halmale brothers had participated in this tournament; otherwise he would have surely mentioned it. This implies that this author, and the copyists later on, did not know the contents of Costen I van Halmale's tournament diary.⁸²

Only on fol. 60 (the entire manuscript contains 175 *folia*) – in 1463 – does one of the first personal notes of the chronicler appear, which is already cited above.⁸³ In this entry, the author of the chronicle reveals himself with the words 'my father'. The copyist at the end of the sixteenth century (Hendrik II van Halmale, see below) took over this perspective. The (original) author identifies himself as a son of Costen II van Halmale. Floris Prims and Hilde Symoens concluded from an excerpt taken from the *Annales Antwerpienses* that this must be Jasper van Halmale.⁸⁴

Indeed, in an entry in 1507 Jasper identifies himself as (co-)author commenting on a remarkable incident that happened when he studied in

⁷⁹ R. Stein, 'Brabant en de Karolingische dynastie. Over het ontstaan van een historiografische traditie', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 110 (1995), 329–351, pp. 340–341.

⁸⁰ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 16v.

⁸¹ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 44r (1413, joust in Antwerp), f. 46v (1429, tournament in Brussels), f. 50r (1440, tournament in Brussels), f. 104r (1494, tournament in Antwerp).

⁸² In the chronicle the tournament is recorded as follows (BRB, ms. 17234, f. 50r): 'Eodem anno [1440] fuerunt Bruxellie hastiludia de 225 galeis oft helmen'.

⁸³ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 60r.

⁸⁴ See Prims, 'De kronijk', 326 and De Ridder-Symoens, 'Halmale, Gaspar van'. Their conclusion was based on the excerpts made by the town secretary, Andries van Valckenisse in the seventeenth century who copied the passage on the Venetian carrack claiming 'ende is by Costen van Halmale, vader van Gaspar die de bovenscr. memorien geschreven gecopieert heeft, gemeten als volgt (...)'. BRB ms. 18724–32, f. 54v. However, this is, of course, Van Valckenisse's interpretation on the basis of the information in the original chronicle.

Padua: ‘me Jaspare de Halmale existente Padua studiorum caussa (...)’.⁸⁵ The authorship of Jasper comes already to the fore in the first pages of the chronicle where he cites two Italian historians, Jacopo Filippo Foresti da Bergamo and Marco Antonio Sabellico, who published their respective universal or world histories in 1483 and 1498–1504.⁸⁶ It is possible that Jasper became acquainted with these works, written in Latin, while studying in Italy and that they were the source of his inspiration to conceive a chronicle himself. Table 1 shows that most pages of the chronicle were dedicated to the years 1510–1524, precisely the most active years of Jasper as alderman in the Antwerp town administration. Jasper was an academic and not a knight; it is significant that he was the only one of the seventeen ‘buitenburgemeesters’ (burgomasters) who held office in Antwerp between 1520 and 1555 without a knightly title.⁸⁷

However, in the older genealogical works Jasper is said to be the great-grandson of Costen I van Halmale.⁸⁸ In fact, on the epitaph with the names of the descendants of Costen II van Halmale, Jasper is not mentioned (Fig. 1). Therefore, next to Jasper there must be another (co-) author of the chronicle. The ‘son’ who is talking about his father in the entry of 1463 can only be Willem II van Halmale. There are more direct references to Willem in the chronicle.⁸⁹ What is more, Willem II is the author of a heraldic compendium in which he wanted to establish his sixteen ancestors (‘quartieren’), eight from his father’s side and eight from his mother’s side.⁹⁰ In order to conceive this heraldic genealogy he visited

⁸⁵ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 112r. The incident: on 1 September 1507 Francesco de Parma was killed by the son of his maid because the salary Francesco paid her was too little. On f. 119v Jasper identifies himself again with the words ‘ego Jaspar van Halmale’.

⁸⁶ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 13v. Jacobus Philippus Bergomensis, *Supplementum Chronicarum* (Venice, 1483) and Marcus Antonius Coccius Sabellicus, *Enneades sive rapsodia historiarius* (Venice, 1498–1504).

⁸⁷ K. Wouters, ‘Een open oligarchie? De machtsstructuur in de Antwerpse magistratuur tijdens de periode 1520–1555’, *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 82 (2004), 905–934, p. 931.

⁸⁸ De Azevedo, *Généalogie*, p. 298; De Herckenrode, *Nobiliaire*, p. 931.

⁸⁹ In 1475 and 1502 the author refers twice to Geertrui van Halmale as ‘the sister of my grandfather Willem van Halmale’. BRB, ms. 17234, f. 69r, 109r.

⁹⁰ De Ghellinck Varnewijck, ‘Livre de raison’, 317–318. A seventeenth-century copy of a part of this genealogy can be found in *Copie des armes et blasons des évêques de Tongres et de Liège*, f. 789. See *Bibliothèque de l’Université de Liège*, 462: ‘Fragment généalogique de la famille de Halmale depuis 1366. (De mons. Willem Van Halmale, amman de la ville d’Anvers)’.

churches in Antwerp and its surroundings to copy the blazons represented on the epitaphs of his ancestors.⁹¹ The result is an illustrated genealogy that traces the origins of his ancestors, both paternal and maternal, back to the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The texts in the heraldic work are all in Dutch, which leads me to suspect that the entries in Dutch in the chronicle are from Willem II, whereas those in Latin are from Jasper.

The chronicle has yet another author as it appears from this entry:

In 1473, Costen [III] van Halmale was born, the eldest son of Costen [II] van Halmale, my great grandfather, and he died in the same year on the eleventh of April, and he is buried in the church of Sint-Lenaarts [near Antwerp].⁹²

In this personal announcement, the perspective has changed. Here, the copyist (or adapter) of the chronicle, Hendrik II van Halmale (1549-1614), introduces himself and takes over the narrative point-of-view.⁹³ It is possible that Hendrik II integrated the notes taken by his grandfather Willem and his great-grandfather Costen II into the chronicle left by Jasper.

Both the chronicle and Willem II's heraldic compendium demonstrate a strong genealogical consciousness incorporating information on both the paternal and maternal lines of Costen II and his son Willem II van Halmale. They lacked an old lineage, although they associated themselves with an old noble family, and could not name themselves after an important (feudal) lordship, which had to be passed over from one generation to another. Therefore, there was no need to stress the agnatic descent.⁹⁴ The epitaph in the Antwerp cathedral testifies as well to the cognatic tradition within the Van Halmale family. The key figures in the genealogy are Costen II and Willem II van Halmale. Both parents of Costen II are identified whereas the blazons of his eight great-grandparents are depicted.⁹⁵ Thus,

⁹¹ There is evidence from the churches of the Dominicans ('Predickeren'), the Franciscans ('Minnebroers') and the church of Voorschoten near Viersel. De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', pp. 323, 327, 335.

⁹² 'Anno 1473 is geboren Costen van Halmale, den outsten sone van Costen van Halmale, mijn oudt grootvader, ende starf int selve jaer den 11en dach van april ende is begraven in Sinte Lenaerts'. BRB, ms. 17234, f. 68r. See also Prims, 'De kronijk', p. 324.

⁹³ See De Ridder-Symoens, 'Halmale, Hendrik van' and De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', pp. 286-290, 371-376.

⁹⁴ See a comparable situation for the Zeeland nobility in A. van Steensel, 'Kinship, Property, and Identity. Noble Family Strategies in Late-Medieval Zeeland', *Journal of family history*, 37 (2012), 247-270, pp. 253-254.

⁹⁵ The same eight blazons (with slight variations in the order) can be seen on the epitaph of Costen II's sister Magdalena (25 November 1498) and her husband Klaas van de Werve (3 January 1503) in the Antwerp church of Saint James.

the Van Halmales demonstrated the wider family networks to which they belonged.⁹⁶ Willem's three children are equally mentioned on the epitaph.

To summarize, Jasper conceived the chronicle, Willem II (and maybe his father Costen II as well) wrote several entries, whereas Willem's grandson Hendrik II integrated all the material and adapted the text. The chroniclers combine family history with other events relevant for the town of Antwerp, although it is definitely not a family chronicle; data on the Van Halmales family are intertwined with the birth and death of members of the ducal family and other noble families from Brabant, for example, Van Berchem, Van Nassau, and Van Bergen-Glymes. In a sense, the authors put their family on par with other noble families in the duchy. In this way, they embedded themselves in the higher echelons of Antwerp (and Brabantine) society and they convinced themselves of their acquired social position. Nevertheless, in the chronicle, the Van Halmales never boasted about their ancestry, although they inserted personal notes.⁹⁷

What can be said about the audience of the chronicle or the influence of the chronicle outside the sphere of the family? There are indications that both Jasper and Hendrik II were active in the Antwerp chambers of rhetoric: Jasper is mentioned as 'hoofman' or chairman of the chamber De Olijftak in 1521,⁹⁸ whereas Hendrik II fulfilled the same function in the chamber De Violieren from 1603 onwards.⁹⁹ That the Van Halmales had these leading functions in the corporations of the rhetoricians corresponds with their intellectual background and their close connection to the town administration. They were able to establish connections within the diverse community that populated these literary chambers.¹⁰⁰ At first sight, the chronicle, written mainly in Latin, does not fit into the

P. Génard, *Inscriptions funéraires et monumentales de la province d'Anvers: arrondissement d'Anvers II. Anvers, Églises paroissiales* (Antwerp, 1863), pp. 226–227. Willem opens his heraldic compendium with the same series: De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', pp. 313–314.

⁹⁶ Buylaert, 'Memory', p. 58 for an analysis of a similar case and the tomb of Nicolas Despars.

⁹⁷ Compare in that respect the chronicle of Nicolas Despars who faked his ancestry: *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹⁸ J. and L. van Boeckel, 'Landjuwelen en haagspelen in de xv^e en de xvi^e eeuw', *Jaarboek De Fonteyne* (1968), 5–27, p. 17.

⁹⁹ F. Donnet, *Het jonstich versaem der violieren. Geschiedenis der rederijkkamer De Olijftak sedert 1480* (Antwerp, 1907), pp. 62–63, 132–133.

¹⁰⁰ See for a similar case concerning the role of intellectuals and state officials in the chamber of rhetoricians 'Met Ghenuchten' in The Hague: S. ter Braake and A. van Dixhoorn, 'Engagement en ambitie. De Haagse rederijkerskamer "Met

repertoire of these chambers, which were focused on the production and performance of literary texts in vernacular. Still, (local) history was one of the themes debated during the meetings of the chambers and could serve as instruction for its members.¹⁰¹ The local impact of the chronicle is demonstrated by the fact that its contents influenced other writers; Lodewijk van Caukercken (1629-1704) and Andries van Valckenisse (1630-1701), both officers at the Antwerp city hall, have used and copied excerpts from the chronicle into their own writings.¹⁰²

The chronicle stops in 1533, with entries in Dutch on the great fire in the church of Our Lady in Antwerp and the death of Hendrik van de Werve Jansz, grandfather (and namegiver?) of the copyist of the chronicle.¹⁰³ In continuation of the *Annales*, Hendrik II van Halmale wrote a separate follow up for the chronicle, a so-called *Livre de raison*. Hendrik II, who studied in Leuven and Douai and was dubbed a knight by Philip II in 1598, begins his *Livre* in 1543, the year of the birth of his eldest brother.¹⁰⁴

Ghenuchten" en de ontwikkeling van een burgerlijke samenleving in Holland rond 1500', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, 9 (2006), 150-190.

¹⁰¹ A. van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten: rederijkers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480-1650)*, (Amsterdam, 2009), pp. 162-165, 275; A.-L. van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1400-1650*, (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 234-236.

¹⁰² Caukercken used excerpts from the Van Halmale chronicle (with mistakes in his transcriptions and translations from the entries in Latin) in a supplement to his second part of the *Chronijck van Antwerpen*. See BRB, ms. 13608, f. 70r-125v. Van Valckenisse used the Van Halmale chronicle in his additions to a sixteenth-century chronicle. See BRB, ms. 18724-32, especially f. 1r ('Memorien raekende de stad van Antwerpen uut de manuscripten N. Halmale') and f. 52r ('Memorien raekende de stad van Antwerpen van Jaspar van Halmale'). See also his chronicle on fifteenth-century Antwerp in ARSA, inv. nr. PK 115.

¹⁰³ BRB, ms. 17234, f. 177v. See for the genealogical details De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', 367. The Van Halmale had several matrimonial alliances with the Van de Werves. This is reflected in the chronicle which has entries on the Van der Werve family on f. 58r (death of Willem van de Werve, see I. de Stein d'Altenstein, 'Werve (van de)', *Annuaire de la noblesse de Belgique*, 26 (1872), 269-324, pp. 309-310), f. 132r (Jan van de Werve), f. 132v and f. 135r (Gerard van de Werve). However, the genealogy of the family Van de Werve is very complicated. For their presence in Zeeland, see Van Steensel, *Edelen*, p. 179 and *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ According to De Ghellinck Varnewijck, 'Livre de raison', pp. 290, 376-378, his handwriting stops in 1606 and the chronicle is continued by his son Hendrik (1596-1679). The (personal) title of knight was given by Philip II in Madrid on

Space lacks here to treat this chronicle into detail. For the moment, it suffices to say that the *Livre* has a far more personal touch than the *Annales Antwerpienses* and is completely in Dutch. It demonstrates again the vivid attention for (family) history of the Van Halmales. Still, the purpose was not mere recording of the family events, but also to define and demarcate the family network to which the Van Halmales belonged.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

In December 1623, Adriaan Quarre testified to the 'noble quality' of the families and houses of Van Halmale and Van der Werve. They were claimed to be 'gentlemen extracted from the old Brabantine knighthood' and this was proven by 'several titles and old documents and by several inscriptions on old tombs and sepulchres of knights and gentlemen from those two families, as well as by old books from sworn heralds'. The declaration was necessary for the entry of a candidate into the noble chapterhouse of Andenne.¹⁰⁶ Apparently, the noble status of the Van Halmales still needed the support of written evidence, partly produced by themselves.

The adaptation of prestigious first names and blazons demonstrate the lack of prestigious ancestors on the one hand, and the aspirations of the Van Halmales on the other hand. They did not possess an important lordship or castle with which they could distinguish themselves. Although the Van Halmales could not enhance the ancestry or prestige of their lineage or their real estate possessions, there were other means to increase their social status.¹⁰⁷ Eventually, they did acquire knightly titles and conspicuously showed knightly behaviour both in tournament and on the battlefield. All this was recorded not only in their writings but also on their tombstone. In both ways, they showed a cognatic concept of their family.

Two of the three contributors to the *Annales Antwerpiense*, Jasper and Hendrik II van Halmale, were law students and leading members of the Antwerp chambers of rhetoric. Moreover, they, as well as other members

4 April 1598: Luc Duerloo and Paul Janssens, *Wapenboek van de Belgische adel van de 15de tot de 20ste eeuw* (Brussels, 1992), p. 900.

¹⁰⁵ Studt, 'Erinnerung', p. 27

¹⁰⁶ Vienna, *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, Familienarchiv Asprenmont-Linden-Reckheim, Urkunden nr. 141. See also several copies of letters concerning this topic in BRB, ms. G. 1305. On the term 'chapterhouse nobility', see Janssens, *De evolutie*, p. 475.

¹⁰⁷ On this point of the strategies of an older noble lineage, see the Van Wassenaars in Rob van der Laarse, 'De ontdekking van de oudheid', *Virtus*, 18 (2011), 9–44.

of the Van Halmale family, occupied numerous positions within the town administration of Antwerp. In spite of their education and administrative careers at a local level, they could not (or did not want to) make the step to a higher level. They never played an important role in the central institutions of the Burgundian or Habsburg administration. However, in their writings they show a keen interest in the weal and woe of the ruling dynasty and the most important noble families of Brabant.

The importance of the writings of the Van Halmale family for Brabantine historiography may seem limited, since the events related in the chronicle are primarily of local importance. However, they do mirror the personal fascination of these patricians for the history of their family, their hometown, and their principality. What is more, both the chronicle and the tournament diary reflect the aspirations of a dominant social category in the late medieval towns of Brabant, Flanders, and Holland. Perhaps the Van Halmales are not representative of patricians in Antwerp or in other towns of the Low Countries since they were educated, on average, above the education levels of their own social category. Several members of the family were creative in writing diaries, genealogies, and history. Their works helped them to express their identity as powerful aldermen, firmly rooted in an urban environment but with open minds for the world of princes and (inter)national politics.